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FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES RELATING TO TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO PARTIES

Progress report

Note by the secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

1. Article 8 of the Convention directs the secretariat "to facilitate assistance to the Parties, particularly developing country Parties, on request, in the compilation and communication of information required in accordance with the provisions of the Convention" (see especially Articles 4.1 and 12.1) and "to ensure the necessary coordination with the secretariats of other relevant international bodies." In order to fulfil this mandate, a number of activities have been started by the secretariat, mainly in the areas of information exchange, training and capacity building, networking and coordination.

2. The Conference of the Parties (COP), at its first session, requested the secretariat to continue to facilitate the provision of technical and financial support to Parties, in cooperation with its partners, and to periodically report back to the COP on progress achieved.

3. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), at its second session, concluded that "the services provided by the secretariat in this area should be recognized, in particular those promoting the exchange of information through CC:INFO and those aiming at the coordination of activities and the effective utilization of resources for support to the preparation of national communications through CC:FORUM," and requested the secretariat to prepare a report for the next session of the SBI on possibilities for strengthening and expanding these activities in support of the preparation of the national communications of Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (see FCCC/SBI/1996/9, para. 41).

B. Possible action by the SBI

4. The SBI is invited to take note of the activities of the secretariat and its partner organizations aimed at facilitating the provision of technical and financial support to countries and of the initial steps taken by the secretariat to expand and strengthen them in accordance with the request made by the SBI at its second session, and to provide guidance to the secretariat thereon.

5. The SBI is also invited to take note of the supplementary funding needs mentioned in section III below and to encourage Parties to make further voluntary contributions to support the work of the secretariat in facilitating technical and financial support to Parties.

II. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

A. Information exchange

6. The Climate Convention Information Exchange Programme (CC:INFO) has been focusing on enhancing the information flow related to the preparation of initial communications by non-Annex I Parties. To this end, before and during the second session of the SBI (Geneva, 27 February - 4 March 1996), several activities were carried out.

7. Among these activities, the "Update to CC:INFO report - January 1996" was prepared and distributed to more than 500 recipients in developing countries, bilateral and multilateral organizations, and government bodies. An information package for heads of delegations was also distributed during the session. CC:INFO staff collected information on organizations worldwide which may contribute technical and financial resources to implement country activities on climate change. In total, about 30 requests for assistance to implement country activities on climate change have been received and processed by the secretariat.

8. In order to increase outreach and save costs associated with the printing and distribution of information in paper form, CC:INFO has been progressively relying on electronic means of dissemination such as e-mail and the World Wide Web (WWW). Most CC:INFO information is now accessible on the WWW as well, including information on activities, organizations, meetings and events relating to the Convention, requests for assistance, and so forth.

9. In addition, the secretariat is studying the feasibility of assisting Parties to establish Climate Convention home pages on the WWW. The feasibility study is being carried out in cooperation with partner organizations in Malaysia, Senegal and Thailand, and with the assistance of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Brazil.

B. Training

10. CC:TRAIN is a UNDP programme funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and bilaterally, and executed by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in close cooperation with the Convention secretariat. Phase II of CC:TRAIN started in March 1996.

11. During Phase II, assistance will be provided to the following 17 Parties in preparing their national communications as required under Article 12 of the Convention: Africa Region: Benin, Chad, Senegal; Latin America and the Caribbean Region: Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru; Asia and Pacific Region: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa.

12. CC:TRAIN promotes the constitution of country teams entrusted with the design of national implementation strategies, workshops and awareness-raising events. Country teams draw on the support of regional partner organizations for the provision of technical assistance, including the development of common training and technical resources through thematic regional training workshops and other means.

13. The network of regional partner institutions comprises: Africa - Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde (ENDA); Latin America and the Caribbean - Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA); Pacific - South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP). The materials and resources developed through this mechanism will be translated into French and Spanish as well and made available to other Parties through various enabling programmes and projects. Information about the programme and its progress will be made available through: regular articles in the quarterly *Climate Change Bulletin*; regional newsletters; a World Wide Web site.

C. Networking and coordination

14. The secretariat continued its work on the informal consultative forum for the exchange of experience on climate change project development, implementation and follow-up (CC:FORUM). The objective of CC:FORUM is to bring actors together, in an informal context, to share experiences, opinions and ideas on how best to develop, implement and coordinate climate change projects, programmes and events, with a view to assisting non-Annex I Parties to prepare national communications.

15. The second and third meetings of CC:FORUM took place in Geneva on 27 February 1996 and in New York on 30 and 31 May 1996. Both meetings were attended by participants from developing countries and bilateral and multilateral organizations working on the development and execution of climate change projects and programmes related to the implementation of the Convention (including the GEF and its implementing agencies). The meetings, inter alia, advanced work on a programme in support of the preparation of national communications (see below, paragraphs 18 to 20), and agreed on ways and means in which workshops and other climate change events of multilateral and bilateral organizations can be coordinated in order to reduce geographical and thematic duplications and gaps.

16. Moreover, the secretariat established and maintains an electronic list-serve that is used by members of CC:FORUM to exchange information with each other.

17. In addition, the secretariat has continued its participation in meetings of the GEF Operations Committee, where project proposals are discussed. The secretariat contributed views on the consistency of such projects with the Convention and the guidance to the financial mechanism given by the COP. The secretariat also took part in some of the meetings of the GEF Climate Change Task Force.

18. Information on progress achieved in multilateral and bilateral activities in support of the preparation of initial communications of developing countries, as well as the conclusions of the SBI at its second session on matters relating to the financial mechanism (see FCCC/SBI/1996/9), indicate a need to expedite and intensify such activities in order for this process to be carried out in the time-frame envisaged in the Convention.

19. The secretariat is cooperating with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the design of a support programme for UNDP assistance in the preparation of initial national communications by developing countries (CC:SUPPORT). Such a programme would take a proactive and coordinated approach, using standardized modules in countries with common needs, in order to move the process along while reducing costs.

20. An initial study has identified several such common needs for which assistance may be requested, for example, starting up enabling projects; training on methodologies and other specific climate change areas; assisting national implementation bodies; improving information exchange and enhancing communication systems; increasing public awareness and education resources; promoting regional exchange activities among countries.

21. As proposed by UNDP, the support programme would make extensive use of regional and national institutions. Bilateral funds and contributions in kind are sought for its implementation. Given the time-frame for the preparation of initial communications, the support programme would need to start before the end of 1996.

III. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

22. Decision 18/CP.1 on other voluntary funding for the biennium 1996-1997 is recalled, which envisaged funding needs for secretariat activities estimated at US$2,761,830. Consistent with this decision, the secretariat prepared a fund raising proposal for approximately US$2,000,000 covering activities which included those related to areas addressed in the present document. That proposal has been submitted by the secretariat to potential contributors as mentioned in document FCCC/SBI/1996/4.

23. Contributions amounting to about US$355,000 have been received from the Governments of New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America (see FCCC/CP/1996/7 and Add.1). The Government of Germany has also pledged funds amounting to about US$253,000 for information exchange activities.

24. The secretariat plans to make use of the above-mentioned contributions and pledges, to strengthen and expand its activities in the area of information exchange (CC:INFO) and networking and coordination (CC:FORUM), as requested by the SBI at its second session and as proposed in the present report. Additional contributions are required if the proposed activities are to be fully implemented.

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